India. May I know from the Minister whether he has set up any committee to oversee that this money is spent only for the relief work and not diverted for other purposes?

श्री भजन लाल : सभापति महोदय इतनी जल्दी कहना सम्भव नहीं है क्योंकि पैसा अभी दिया है ।

DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: Will you be able to prove this?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will you set up a Committee to see whether the money has been properly spent and not diverted?

SHRI DHARANIDHAR BASUMATARI: They never spend the money properly. Instead they spend on other works I want to know from the Minister whether he will ensure that this money is not diverted for some other works.

DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: Why are you telling untruths?

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Have you got any figures?

श्री भजन लाल : सभापति महोदय, बाकायदा भारत सरकार चेक करेगी सारी बात को लेकिन कहीं से शिकायत आएगी तभी करेगी ।फिर भी हम चेक करेंगे, मोनिटर करेंगे। जिन-जिन प्रदेशों को पैसा दिया है क्या वह उस काम में खर्च हो रहा है या नहीं ।

MR. CHAIRMAN He wants to now whether you have set up a Committee.

श्री भजन लाल : कोई लिखित शिकायत अभी नहीं मिली (**व्यवधान**)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 42. ... (*Interruptions*)... No, I am not permitting. I have already spent 41 minutes.

Kelkar Committee on Newsprint Allocation Policy

*42. SHRI JERLIE E. TARIANG: SHRI KAPIL VERMA:†

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state what are the recommendations of the Kelkar Committee regarding the newsprint allocation policy and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): A statement containing recommendations of the Kelkar Committee regarding the Long Term Newsprint Allocation Policy are laid on the Table of the House. (*See* Appendix CXLVIII, Annexure No. 7]

The recommendations in Step No. 1 are under consideration of the Govment. The recommendations in Step No. II relate to long term policy to be formulated during the Eighth Five Year Plan.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: Sir, as is well-known the newspaper industry is being crushed under the heavy weight of the rising prices of newsprint and the result is that prices of all newspapers are going up. The newspaper readers are also being affected. The Kelkar Committee as a Step No. 1 has recommended that indigenous newsprint should be consumed fully and that import should be treated only as a supplementary measure. But the indigenous newsprint pricese are very, very high and it is mostly produced by the plants set up by the Government itself and over and above that the quality is also very bad. May I know from the Minister whether the Government will take some steps to reduce the

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Kapil Verma.

prices of indigenous newsprint so that there may be some relief for the newspaper industry?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): Sir, the Ministry of Industry has gone into this question and has fixed the prices after consulting various experts. They took up this matter with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting also. The Ministry of Industry is of the opinion that the prices of indigenous newsprint are not very high, at the moment. Sir, ultimately we have to be self-reliant and make use of the indigenous newsprint also. Therefore,, this indigenous newsprint has to be used and we cannot continuously go on supplying the imported newsprint because of foreign exchange constraints. This time we have allotted only Rs. 200 crores according to which a policy has to be framed. Prices of some newspapers have risen but they are entirely because of the rise in priecs of indigenous newsprint. Well, it is very difficult to say that is the only factor in determining the prices. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting asked the Ministry of Industry to consider this and they feel after consulting the experts that the prices are all right.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: Sir, the Minister has stated that the Step No. 1 recommendations of the Kelkar Committee are under ocnsideration. I would like the Minister to assure the House that the medium and small newspapers interests will be protected while taking decision on this Committee's report. For example., the Committee has recommended that the import of newsprint should be scaled down from 300 MT to 50 MT as far as small and medium newspapers are concerned. There has been a protest against this. I hope, the Minister will make some adjustments. Then about the allocation and the import of glazed newspapers also, certain provisions have been made, ecrtain recommendations have been made which are unacceptable to the small and medium newspaers. Will the Government look into this?

While the whole newspaper industry has welcomed the OGL, ,Open General Licence for import of newsprint, the 40 per cent tariff that has been recommended is quite high. Will the Government assure the House that it will make adjustment in these rates while taking a decision on the Committee's recommendation?

SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT: Broadly, I would like to aassure the hon. Member that the Government is very sympathetic particularly to the small and medium newspapers, the language papers and wants to help them. I cannot anticipate a decision. The matter is under consideration. But irrespective of the recommedations of the Kelkar Committee, the Government has appointed a committee to give attention to the problems of the small and medium newspapers including the language papers to provide them relief in specific direction. We are very keen to help them but three dissenting notes have been attached by the small and medium newspapers and the language newspapers to the Kelkar Committee. While considering these recommendations and also as I said, irrespective of these recommendations, otherwise, the Prime Minister emphasised that we must give some relief to the small and medium newspapers. For that, we have set up a separate committee which is going into this matter and I have asked them to make the recommendations. All he representatives of the various Ministries are on that Committee.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir. it seems because certain newspapers like the 'Hindu' and the 'Express' are exposing the scandals of the Government, the Government of India has declared the entire newspapers industry as its enemy. (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: As a very senior Member, he should know the rules.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put your question.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, my colleague, hon. Mr. Verma was correct. The price of the newsprint is hiked wantonly and arbitrarily so that the newspapers and the newspaper readers, the people will be suffering, the circulation will go down and many people may not read newspapers. It seems to be the policy. It will tell you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put your question, please.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, even foreign newsprint price has been increased. We can understand that foreign newsprint price will go up due to inflation once in a year by 5 per cent or 10 per cent. After every three months, the STC is increasing the price. Coming to the indigenously produced newsprint
I want to know what are the norms applied by the Government. How do they fix the newsprint price produced in India? For example, the Tamil Nadu newsprint unit is producing one of the worst kind of newsprint in India but its price has been increased over Rs. 1003 per ton. I would like toknow from the hon. Minister, will you check it up with the Ministry of Industry? Are you satisfied? What are the norms, what are the criteria for fixing the price? I see some foul play behind this. It is arbitrarily fixed. That is why, I would like to know, will you please check it up with the Ministry of Industry?

Finally, Sir, the hon. Minister is not clear regarding the recommendations about step 2. They have recommended introducing an OGL import facility to all newspapers and it is to start in the first year of the Eighth Plan. What is the reaction I will congratulate the Government if it does it. If it is a good thing, why wait for another two or three years, why don't you start now? I would like to know the reaction of the hon. Minister.

SHRI H. K.L. BHAGAT: Well, Sir, I would give margin to the political overtones with which the hon. Member as loaded his supplementary. (*Interruptions*). I will answer you. It is a total figment of is imagination and factually wrong that the Government has adopted a policy as a result of which newspaper circulation is going down and that the Government wants newspapers to be devalued and so on. It is a total figment of his imagination. (*Interruptions*). Please hear me. On the other hand, the number of newspapers, the magazins and their circulation are going up. And there is no discrimination whatsoever with the Government. In spite of what my friend says, in spite of what anybody writes, irrespective of what newspapers write, the Government, in its newsprint policy, in in its policy towards the media, is making no discrimination whatsoever. It is going by the same policy in respect of every newspaper. He cannot point out a single case of discrimination.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: You are totally killing the newspaper industry. You are not discriminating between the 'Indian Express' or 'The Hindu' or X or Y. You are totally killing the industry.

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT: We are not killing anything. We do not consider newspapers as our adversaries. We all work for the same purpose with a spirit of friendship and cooperation. If you criticise that, we welcome that. We do not care for that. You are projecting a totally wrong thing because you want to get some cheap popularity. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: You have made a political speech.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: This is the attitude of the Government. He says, "We do not care for criticism."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Vithalbhai Patel.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, he has made a political speech. Where are the answers?

ठाकुर जगतपाल सिंह : डी० एम० के० को छापने के लिए बहुत से नहीं मिल रहे हैं।

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, let me make it clear that the DMK Member does not know the ABC of the newspaper industry. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is also a pressman, Baba. Both are pressmen. He is from Gujarat. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: The newspaper print policy has not been changed for many years. It commenced many years ago. There is no change in it. But I agree that the price of newsprint is too high.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: That is my point.

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: This is so because the Government has not taken care, while giving licence to many persons for manufacture of newsprint, to see whether power in available in sufficient quantity or not. In all, the main problem of the newspaper mills is power problem. They do not produce according to the installed capacity. They produce hardly fifty per cent. May I request the Minister to see, whenever you give licence for manufacture of newsprint, that sufficient power and raw material are available. If they are available the newsprint price will not be so high.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He wants to know whether you will see that power is made available. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: We are talking about decolourisation, etc. Do you thing that you are going to have sufficient newsprint by the beginning of the Eighth Five-Year Plan and is that why you are keeping it pending?

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT: I can appreciate the anxiety of the hon Member to improve the quality of the indigenous newsprint and the newsprint made by the Indian mills. Number one: Their production capacity; they are utilising more. It has increased. The quality has also somewhat improved. But there is scope for improvement. There is scope for increase in production. And the Kelkar Committee made some recommendations on that. I can assure him that all his thinking and the thinking of this House will be conveyed to the Ministry of Industry which is concerned with this. All the same increase in production is there and to some extent the quality has also improved.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: May I know from the Minister when and how the present restrictive policy, regulatory policy, in respect of newsprint allocation will be changed to a more liberal poicy? Secondly, he said that every effort is being made to improve the quality of the newsprint here. At present the newsprint produced in this country is of a lower quality for which they have to pay a higher price while the quality of the newsprint imported is higher and also the price is low. It looks as if the newspaper industry here is subsidising the inefficient and technologically most backward newsprint industry for a long time to come. There seems to be no escape from this. As

a result of this restrictive and regulatory policy of the Government the freedom of the press has suffered a great deal. Therefore, may I know from the Minister—I understand he is very genuinely concerned with the freedom of the press as he has expressed—when he is going to liberate the newspapers in this country from this stranglehold of higher prices, high-cost newsprint and very poor newsprint....

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): And big business houses.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADSWAMY: Yes, I agree with you. When you make newsprint cheaper, then only you will have liberated the newspapers from the big business houses, from the big business barons. How soon?

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT: I have great respect for the honourable Member. He is a very senior Member and, I believe, a knowledgeable Member. I would liike to tell him we are proud that the press in this country is free, as free as anywhere in the world. The press has contributed and it is also the....

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Without getting a briefing from you!

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT: I know things are not in your hand; otherwise, I know how free you would keep the press. Luckily things are not in your hand. What I wish to say is the press has contributed to this freedom. But the Government also is doing its duty. Keeping in view the constraint of resources and other things with regard to newsprint, the Government policy has been—I would not say liberal; we are doing no favour; it is part of our duty—to contribute to the freedom and strength of the press. That duty we are doing and we will continue to do. Now, the Indian industry, not only the newspaper industry, the various other aspects of the industry, need to be upgraded, need to be helped, and there not specific recommendations in the Kelkar Committee report also. Finally, if I may conclude by one sentence, what Mr. Gurupadaswamy said, with respect to him, is only political and not correct.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Was he practising for the AICC speech??

*43. [*Transferred to the 15th November, 1988*].

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question, 44.

Setting up of new food processing units in Rajasthan

*44. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to setup new food processing units in Rajasthan; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) The Ministry has planned to have a series of meetings with the States/Uts at the zonal level. The first of these meetings for the Central Zone was held on 18th October, 1988 which was addressed by the Minister of State for Food Processing Industries. The State of Rajasthan was represented in the meeting. A package of measures announced by the Ministry was circulated in the meeting and the States were asked to identify suitable schemes. The representative of Rajasthan promised to formulate suitable plans/schemes. These are now awaited.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, I would like to know from the honourable Minister what the abjectives of this Ministry are and what steps are being taken by the Ministry to enhance rural income and the overall rural employment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.